

March 26, 2021

**Congresswoman Grace Meng (NY-6)**  
**Testimony to the House Foreign Affairs Committee**  
**Member's Day Hearing**

Chairman Meeks, Ranking Member McCaul, and distinguished members of this Committee, thank you for this opportunity to discuss several of my priorities that are under the jurisdiction of the House Foreign Affairs Committee. I always look back on my time on this Committee so fondly. I am grateful to the many friendships I've made, and I look forward to being together in person again.

First, I want to thank this Committee for marking up my **Refugee Sanitation Facility Safety Act (H.R. 1158)** just yesterday. Thank you in particular to Representative Zeldin, my partner in this effort.

One of my top priorities as a Member of Congress is protecting those who are vulnerable around the world – whether women and girls seeking an education or employment, those who lack access to basic services, or victims of natural disasters. As Vice Chair of the State and Foreign Operations House Appropriations Committee, I am proud to do what I can to help direct our federal funding priorities to address these concerns. During the 117<sup>th</sup> Congress, I hope this Committee will champion bills that protect vulnerable women and girls around the world.

Today, I want to bring to your attention a few pieces of legislation, some of which have already been introduced and others which I will reintroduce in the coming months.

First, I'd like to discuss the **Safe from the Start Act (H.R. 571)**, which aims to prevent and respond to gender-based violence (GBV) from the onset of emergencies. This legislation helps the humanitarian community take preventative measures to ensure that quality services are available to survivors from the onset of an emergency or crisis. Crises like the COVID-19 pandemic exacerbate risks for GBV, which is exactly what Safe from the Start is set up to mitigate.

I am thankful to the bipartisan co-leads of this legislation: Representatives Chris Stewart, Lois Frankel, Mario Diaz-Balart, and Chrissy Houlahan, as well as the cosponsors who sit on this Committee: Chairman Meeks, and Representatives Phillips, Cicilline, Costa, Titus, Deutch, Lowenthal, Connolly, Spanberger, Bass, Wild, Kinzinger, and Young Kim.

I also reintroduced the **Divided Families Reunification Act (H.R. 826)**, with Representative Van Taylor, as well as my colleagues on this Committee: Representatives Sherman, Bass, Omar, Andy Kim, Schneider, Connolly, and Young Kim. Over 70 years ago, the division of the Korean Peninsula into the two Koreas separated millions of Koreans from their family members. This bill requires the Secretary of State or a designee to consult with officials in South Korea on potential opportunities to reunite Korean American families with their family members in North Korea and requires the Special Envoy on North Korean Human Rights to submit a report on the opportunities for video reunions.

I will also be reintroducing the **Youth, Peace, and Security Act**, along with Representatives Fitzpatrick and Phillips. Youth populations have long been at the forefront of building peace in their communities by creating youth-led movements to mitigate negative effects of conflict and to prevent recurring cycles of violence. After all, it will be the young people who bear the burden of sustaining the peace over generations and lead their society from reconciliation to prosperity. I look forward to introducing this legislation and hope to have this Committee's support.

Finally, I will also reintroduce the **Global Wildlife Trafficking Biosecurity Act** with Representative Jeff Fortenberry. This bill is an entirely international response to end commercial trade in live wildlife for human consumption. It does this by incentivizing governments to address the root causes of zoonotic pandemics through international cooperation and empowers U.S. assistance for health surveillance, wildlife trade enforcement, biodiversity, and food security.

Thank you again for allowing me to testify and for your leadership on critical issues of human rights and national security. I look forward to continue working with this Committee in the 117<sup>th</sup> Congress.